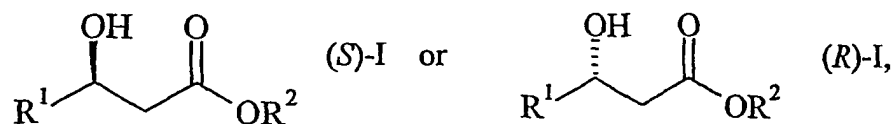


Abstract Of The Disclosure

A process for the preparation of enantiomerically pure (S)- or (R)-4-halo-3-hydroxybutyrates of formula (I):



wherein R¹ is CH₂X, CHX₂ or CX₃ and X independently represents Cl and/or Br and wherein R² is C₁₋₆-alkyl, C₃₋₈-cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl, and each aryl or aralkyl is optionally further substituted with one or more C₁₋₄-alkyl groups and/or halogen atoms, by asymmetric hydrogenation of 4-halo-3-oxobutyric acid esters of formula (II):



wherein R¹, R² and X are as defined above in the presence of a catalyst of a ruthenium complex of a chiral ligand of formula (III):

